(c) The above proposals are at preliminary stages. Therefore, no financial allocation has so far been finalised.

Shortage of aircraft and helicopter pilots

†1503. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that country is facing acute shortage of pilots of aircrafts and helicopters as well;

(b) whether it is also a fact that DGCA does not have even one helicopter Pilot operations Inspector to examine qualifications and efficiency of about 150 helicopter pilots engaged in the country;

(c) if so, whether Government are considering to take any steps to meet shortage of qualified pilots; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Due to the growth in the aviation sector there is an increase in the number of scheduled and non scheduled operators with many of them going in for a fleet expansion programme. This has manifested in shortage of type rated pilots.

(b) Yes, Sir. The post of Inspector of Flying/Flight Operations Inspector (Helicopter) is vacant since 16.08.2004, due to shortage of eligible helicopters pilots in the country and the fact that no pilots from the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and aviation industry are willing to serve as Flight Operations Inspector (Helicopter) because of the gap between the remunerations offered by PSUs/industry and the prescribed pay-scale for this post in Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). However, DGCA approved examiners are carrying out skill test of pilots to ensure safety in operation. Also services of Helicopter Advisor from European Union attached with Helicopter Cell in DGCA are being utilised by DGCA.

(c) and (d) The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled pilots. These include

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for exercising the privileges of their licences for commercial transport operations under prescribed conditions for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/ Aero Club of India.

Safety Audit in Civil Aviation sector

1504. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that passenger safety is at stake after the boom in the Civil Aviation sector;

(b) whether safety audit is being done regularly on schedule;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Government would consider evoking a civil aviation regulating authority to tackle the issues of passenger safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Safety Audit of Airlines/Operator are carried out by the audit team of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) as per the relevant Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR). Performance of the operator is assessed on the basis of incidents and other violations along with feedback from the regional offices, where the operator is based before carrying out Safety Audit. During the period 2004—06 (till date) 21 Safety Audits have been carried out on twenty operators.

(d) DGCA is the safety regulator for civil aviation and enforcing highest level of Safety in Aircraft Operations, Maintenance, Passenger Safety by Safety Audits, Surveillance Inspections, Spot Checks, Ramp Inspections, meetings with Airlines Operators etc.